



NEWS FROM THE OFFICE OF
ADAM J. BELLO
MONROE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

For Immediate Release
Tuesday, January 21, 2025

COUNTY EXECUTIVE ADAM BELLO ANNOUNCES CREATION OF MONROE COUNTY LAND BANK

\$1 Million in ARPA funds used to turn vacant properties into affordable housing options in rural and suburban areas of Monroe County

ROCHESTER, NY — Monroe County Executive Adam Bello today announces the establishment of the Monroe County Land Bank Corporation (MCLBC), a transformative initiative funded with \$1 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. MCLBC is the 29th land bank created in New York State and will work to address unsafe conditions caused by vacant and abandoned properties while creating affordable homeownership across Monroe County's 29 suburban and rural communities.

"Vacant properties diminish the quality of life in our neighborhoods, posing risks to public safety, health and housing stability," **said County Executive Bello**. "The Monroe County Land Bank will not only revitalize these properties but also provide much-needed housing options, strengthening our communities and boosting economic growth."

The MCLBC's goal is to acquire, rehabilitate and sell properties to home buyers across Monroe County. The MCLBC will be one more tool that the County can offer towns and villages to improve neighborhoods while creating affordable homeownership opportunities. The MCLBC will complement existing programs like the County's Make Monroe Home and the First-Time Home Buyer Programs. These existing programs are providing properties across suburban Monroe County to income eligible first-time homebuyers who may not have been able to acquire their first home otherwise. Combined, these efforts will increase the housing supply while addressing critical safety and health issues by eliminating hazards associated with abandoned structures.

"Creating affordable housing opportunities for our community has always been one of my top priorities, and the creation of the Monroe County Land Bank Corporation (MCLBC) will help us do just that," **said Congressman Joe Morelle**. "Utilizing federal dollars I helped secure, and under the leadership of County Executive Adam Bello, the MCLBC will help breathe new life into vacant and abandoned properties across our community and give more families the opportunity for homeownership. I'm grateful to County Executive Bello for his leadership on this issue, and I look forward to continuing our work together to give every Rochesterian the opportunity and resources necessary to thrive."

“The Monroe County Land Bank is a game-changer for tackling the blight of vacant properties and turning them into new homes for county residents who are dealing with a shortage of available housing stock,” **said U.S. Minority Leader Chuck Schumer.**

“Delivering \$1 million in federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act that I crafted and passed into law to kick start this initiative is a win-win-win for Monroe County—revitalizing neighborhoods, creating safe housing, and boosting economic growth. I commend County Executive Bello for his leadership in transforming these once-abandoned properties into vibrant and affordable homes that will strengthen families and communities across the region.”

“Increasing opportunities for homeownership while addressing blighted and abandoned properties is a winning solution for municipalities,” **said U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand.** “The creation of the Monroe County Land Bank will be a critical tool to help rehabilitate housing supply that has fallen into disrepair and provide new opportunities for residents to secure affordable housing. I applaud County Executive Bello and the legislature for this initiative, and I was proud to help secure these funds through President Biden’s American Rescue Plan Act.”

“Suburban and rural communities have long-desired assistance with ‘zombie properties,’ which pose significant health and safety risks to neighborhoods,” **said Legislature President Yversha Román.** “The creation of the Monroe County Land Bank is an innovative and practical way to resolve aspects of the housing supply shortage and affordability by rehabilitating abandoned properties and providing potential first-time homeowners access to quality properties without the significant financial hindrances they would experience elsewhere. I am glad to see the county continue to address the housing crisis with real solutions.”

This initiative comes at a critical time when housing demand exceeds supply in Monroe County. The MCLBC aims to bridge this gap by increasing the housing supply and prioritizing affordability, while creating new opportunities for Monroe County residents.

“As a longtime advocate for homeowners, I am excited to be a part of the newly-created Monroe County Land Bank Corporation. Across New York State, land banks have proven to be a valuable resource to address vacant homes that have fallen into disrepair. The Monroe County Land Bank can and will play a role in helping to return some of these properties back into productive use and therefore help alleviate the housing shortage our community faces,” **said Kevin Purcell, Chairperson of Monroe County Land Bank and Senior Attorney at Empire Justice Center.** “I want to thank County Executive Bello for being a champion of this cause, going back to his days as Irondequoit Town Supervisor. He recognized early on that we need to utilize an “all of the above” approach to address our housing crisis and his continued support is a big reason why the Monroe County Land Bank now exists.”

County Executive Bello has long championed efforts to combat the negative impact of vacant properties. As Irondequoit Town Supervisor in the mid-2010s, he prioritized addressing

neighborhood blight. As County Clerk in 2016, Bello created the Monroe County Vacant and Abandoned Property Task Force.

The task force's report, "Zombies Among Us," highlighted the growing problem of vacant properties and recommended land banking as part of the solution. This work was further advanced in the 2018 report, "[The Way Forward](#)" which reiterated the need for a countywide land bank for the twenty-nine municipalities of Monroe County outside of the City of Rochester.

During his first term as County Executive in 2021, Bello created the Monroe County Vacant Property Advisory Committee to further these efforts. A year later, he announced the launch of mcvacants.com, a comprehensive online resource to provides residents, potential property owners and local municipalities with resources aimed at reducing zombie and vacant properties in the county.

With the establishment of MCLBC, its newly-appointed Board of Directors will engage in a strategic planning process to define its mission, staffing, and programmatic needs. This process will incorporate input from the housing experts, county staff, and stakeholders from across Monroe County's municipalities.

—30—

Media inquiries:

Steve Barz, Director of Communications
stevebarz@MonroeCounty.gov
(585) 753-1064

Molly Clifford, Deputy Director
mollyclifford@MonroeCounty.gov
(585) 233-3699